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She Who Must Not Be Named



Charles M. Blow DEC. 3, 2010





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This is it. This is the last time I’m going to write the name Sarah Palin until she does something truly newsworthy, like declare herself a candidate for the presidency. Until then, I will no longer take part in the left’s obsessive-compulsive fascination with her, which is both unhealthy and counterproductive.

She’s the Zsa Zsa Gabor of American politics. She once did something noteworthy, but she’s now just famous for being famous.

She was a vice presidential nominee. But she lost. She was the governor of Alaska. But she quit. Now she’s just a political personality — part cheerleader, part bomb-thrower — being kept afloat in part by the hackles of her enemies and the people who admire her resilience in the face of them. The left’s outsize and unrelenting assault on her has made her a folk hero. The logic goes that if she’s making people on the left this upset, she must be doing something right.

Yet the left continues to elevate her every utterance so that they can mock and deride her. The problem is that this strategy continues to backfire. The more the left tries to paint her as one of the “Mean Girls,” the more the right sees her as “Erin Brockovich.” The never-ending attempts to tear her down only build her up. She’s like the ominous blob in the horror films: the more you shoot at it, the bigger and stronger it becomes.



Charles M. Blow
Damon Winter/The New York Times

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Finally, it looks like we’ve had enough of her. But she is so funny, and believe me there is so little to laugh at right now, it will be...
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might have thought about before subjecting us to another nonsensical article about Sarah Palin.
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Brilliant. Enough said.
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Yes, she's about as sharp as a wet balloon, but we already know that. How much more time and energy must be devoted to dissecting that? How is this constructive, or even instructive at this point? What purpose does it serve other than inflaming passions to drive viewership and Web clicks?

As Politico's editor in chief, John F. Harris, and its executive editor, Jim VandeHei, very candidly expressed in August: "More traffic comes from an item on Sarah Palin's 'refudiation' faux pas than from our hundreds of stories on the complexities of health care reform or Wall Street regulation."

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So left-leaning blogs like The Huffington Post plaster pictures of her and her family all over their sites with entries about her latest gaffe or sideswipe. But she's barely mentioned on popular conservative blogs.

The same leftward skew is also true on television. An analysis of CNN, MSNBC and Fox News from Nov. 3 to Dec. 2, using data from ShadowTV, a monitoring service, found that CNN mentioned the name "Sarah Palin" nearly 800 times. (O.K., I had to write her name there. Sorry.) Left-leaning MSNBC mentioned it nearly 1,000 times. But Fox News, which employs her, mentioned it fewer than 600 times. (Secondary mentions like "Sarah" or "Palin" are not included in the count. Neither is "Mama Grizzly.")

People on the left seem to need her, to bash her, because she is, in three words, the way the left likes to see the right: hollow, dim and mean. But since she's feeding on the negativity, I suggest three other words: get over it.

I invite you to join me on [Facebook](#) and follow me on [Twitter](#), or e-mail me at chblow@nytimes.com.

A version of this op-ed appears in print on December 4, 2010, on Page A23 of the New York edition with the headline: She Who Must Not Be Named. Today's Paper | [Subscribe](#)

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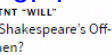
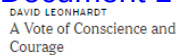
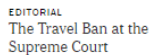


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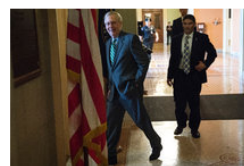
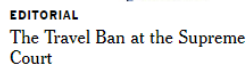
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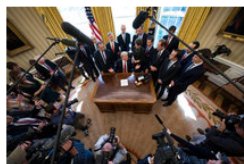
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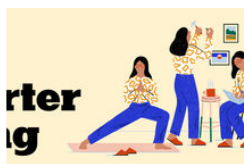
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